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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Lebanon

SUBJECT Effort at Putsch in Lebanon

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1. On the morning of 10 Dec 53 a group of Lebanese general staff officers under the leadership of Col. Ghazi attempted a putsch, with the objective of overthrowing the government and substituting a military dictatorship for it. The project, which was strongly supported from Syria, was known to the Ministry of Defense two hours before the attempt, and easily broken up.
2. Nine officers were arrested, of whom seven belonged to the general staff. Widespread inquiries are still in progress, but the Syrian support of the movement is indubitable.
3. A strict censorship was immediately put into force in order to prevent any panic on the bourse. The press release given out formally denied there was any plot in the Lebanese army.
4. Col. Ghazi was the head of training in the general staff. Politically he is an extreme Lebanese nationalist, a Maronite, married to a Frenchwoman. The Maronites wish to decrease Arab-Mohammedan influence in favor of the Christians. Another leader of the movement was Lt. Col. Labaki.

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